

CLAIMS:

1. A method of determining the size of a compressed stream of audio-visual data, wherein the compression has taken place by means of variable bit-rate compression, the method comprising the step of determining the duration of the stream of audio-visual data, characterized in that the method further comprises the following steps:

- 5 (a) determining the compression technique;
(b) determining the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data; and
(c) determining the size of the stream of audio-visual data using the information determined in the previous steps.

10 2. A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is indicated by an average bit rate at a given compression technique.

15 3. A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is indicated by a factor of information redundancy in the stream of audio-visual data.

4. A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is derived from meta-data associated with the stream of audio-visual data.

20 5. A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the duration of the stream of audio-visual data is derived from meta-data associated with the stream of audio-visual data.

25 6. A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the duration of the stream of audio-visual data is derived from an apparatus for storing audio-visual data, the apparatus being pre-programmed to store the stream of audio-visual data.

7. A method as claimed in to claim 6, wherein the apparatus is pre-programmed to record the stream of audio-visual data from a pre-determined start time until a pre-determined end time.

8. A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the size of the stream of audio-visual data is determined prior to reception of the full stream of audio-visual data.

9. A method as claimed in to claim 1, wherein the stream of audio-visual data is analog and digitized prior to the compression.

10. A circuit for determining the size of a compressed stream of audio-visual data, wherein the compression has taken place by means of variable bit-rate compression, the circuit comprising a central processing unit conceived to determine the duration of the stream of audio-visual data, characterized in that the central processing unit is further conceived to:

(a) determine the compression technique used to compress the stream of audio-visual data;

(b) determine the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data; and

(c) determine the size of the stream of audio-visual data using the information on the duration of the stream of audio-visual data, the compression technique used to compress the stream of audio-visual data and the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data.

11. An apparatus for storing a stream of audio-visual data, the apparatus comprising a compression controller for compressing the stream of audio-visual data prior to storage of the stream of audio-visual data and the circuit as claimed in to claim 10.

12. A signal carrying a stream of audio-visual data and meta-data associated with the stream of audio-visual data, characterized in that the meta-data comprises information on the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data.

13. A signal according to claim 12, wherein the information on the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data comprises an average bit rate of at least a part of the stream of audio-visual data.

14. A signal according to claim 12, wherein the information on the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data comprises a factor of information redundancy in the stream of audio-visual data.

15. A signal according to claim 12, wherein the information on the complexity of the stream of audio-visual data is provided prior to providing the stream of audio-visual data.